

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume thereby equalizing the inflation volume of the respective bladders whereby substantially even inflation timing, with substantially even applied pressure, and, thus, overall smooth massage dynamics may be provided without overly complicated inflation fluid control.

2. (Currently Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part comprising two opposing sheets, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein the garment is shaped to accommodate the lower leg portion of the user's body, wherein bottom bladders massage the user's foot and top bladders massage the user's calf, and wherein the sheets include a notch on at least one lateral side of the garment separating the bottom bladders from the top bladders whereby the garment may provide a snug fit to user.

3. (Previously Presented) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein the garment includes a pocket along substantially the entire length of at least one lateral side of the garment having an opening communicating with the respective bladders and wherein the inflation assembly including a source of inflation fluid and tubing extending from this source into the pocket.

4. (Currently Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part comprising an inner sheet and an outer sheet, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein the garment includes a loop fastening strip and a complimentary hook fastening strip which, when engaged with each other, form a hook-and-loop attachment;

wherein the loop fastening strip is secured to the inner sheet and the hook fastening strip is secured to the outer sheet;

wherein the loop fastening strips is secured to the inner sheet laterally inward from pull handles and over and laterally beyond a tubing pocket and wherein the hook fastening strip is secured to the outer sheet adjacent its longitudinal edge.

5. (Previously Presented) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies a substantially constant inflation capacity to each of the bladders.

6. (Previously Presented) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which selectively inflates and deflates the bladders;

wherein, during deflation of the bladders, the inflation fluid flows through exhaust lines and wherein at least some of the exhaust lines include a throttling device.

7. (Previously Presented) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which selectively inflates and deflates the bladders;

wherein inflation of a bladder is underway prior to complete deflation of the previously inflated bladder.

8. (Previously Presented) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which selectively inflates and deflates the bladders;

wherein the inflation assembly includes a zone selector which allows a user to select a certain zone of the garment.

9. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the garment is made of two opposing sheets and wherein seams between the sheets define the bladders.

10. (Currently Amended) A massage device for massaging a body part of a person in an unsupervised and unattended setting, said massage device comprising:

a garment for enclosing the body part, the garment having a plurality of bladders arranged along the garment to massage the body part, each of said bladders substantially encircling a portion of the body part; and

an inflation assembly which supplies fluid pressure to each of the bladders to inflate the respective bladders;

wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume thereby equalizing the inflation volume of the respective bladders whereby substantially even inflation timing, with substantially even applied pressure, and, thus, overall smooth massage dynamics may be provided without overly complicated inflation fluid control; and

wherein necking seams are positioned relative to certain bladders to provide at least some of the bladders with approximately the same inflated volume, whereby substantially even inflation timing, with substantially even applied pressure, and, thus, overall smooth massage dynamics may be provided without overly complicated inflation fluid control.

11. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 10, wherein decreased volume in the necked bladder(s) is accomplished without decreasing the sensation of the necked bladder(s).

12. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 10, wherein the necked shape of each of the bladders does not substantially change the original, overall, shape of the unnecked bladder so that substantially the same massage sensation is delivered.

13. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 12, wherein the necked shape and unnecked shape of the bladders is substantially rectangular.

14. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 12, wherein the garment is shaped to accommodate the lower leg portion of the user's body, and wherein top bladders circumscribing the user's calf are necked and the bottom bladders circumscribing the user's foot are unnecked.

15. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 14, wherein the garment includes twelve bladders, wherein four of these bladders massage the user's foot and eight of these bladders massage the user's calf.

16. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 9, wherein the garment comprises two opposing sheets made of a material which is lightweight, durable and easily cleanable.

17. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 16, wherein the sheets are made of urethane film.

18. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 17, wherein the outer sheet is urethane film supported on a laminate and wherein the inner sheet is unsupported urethane film.

19. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the garment is shaped to accommodate the lower leg portion of a user, wherein the garment comprises sheets with seams therebetween to define the bladders and wherein the sheets have an opening for receipt of the user's heel.

20. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the garment is shaped to accommodate the lower leg portion of the user's body, wherein bottom bladders massage the user's foot and top bladders massage the user's calf, and wherein the sheets include a notch on each lateral side separating the bottom bladders from the top bladders.

21. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the garment includes a pocket having opening communicating with the respective bladders and wherein the inflation assembly including a source of inflation fluid and tubing extending from this source into the pocket.

22. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 21, wherein the garment is shaped to accommodate the lower leg portion of the user's body, wherein bottom bladders massage the user's foot and top bladders massage the user's calf, wherein the sheets include a notch on each lateral side separating the bottom bladders from the top bladders, and wherein the pocket includes slots adjacent the notch to provide an entry passage for the tubing into the top and bottom portions of the pocket.

23. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 1, wherein the garment includes a loop fastening strip and a complimentary hook fastening strip which, when engaged with each other, form a hook-and-loop attachment.

24. (Currently Amended) A massage device as set forth in claim 23, wherein the loop fastening strip is secured to [the] an inner sheet and the hook fastening strip is secured to [the] an outer sheet.

25. (Original) A massage device as set forth in claim 24, wherein the loop fastening strips is secured to the inner sheet laterally inward from pull handles and over and laterally beyond a tubing pocket and wherein the hook fastening strip is secured to the outer sheet adjacent its longitudinal edge.

Claims 26-88 (Cancelled)

89. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment for use in association with an inflation assembly comprising a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part, wherein each of the bladders substantially encircles a portion of the body part, and each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume.

90. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89 wherein, when inflated, each of the bladders apply substantially equal pressure to the body part.

91. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89, wherein the garment is made of two opposing sheets and wherein seams between the sheets define the bladders.

92. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 91, wherein necking seams are positioned relative to one or more bladders to create corresponding necked bladders, wherein the bladders which are not necked bladders are unnecked bladders, and wherein the necking seams are intended to decrease the inflated volume of the necked bladders.

93. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 92, wherein the shape of the necked bladders is substantially similar to the shape of the unnecked bladders.

94. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 93, wherein the shape of the necked bladders is substantially rectangular.

95. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 93, wherein the inflatable garment is shaped to accommodate a lower leg portion of a user, and wherein top bladders which encircle a user's calf are necked bladders, and bottom bladders which encircle the user's foot are unnecked bladders.

96. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89, wherein the inflatable garment is shaped to accommodate a lower leg portion of a user, and wherein the garment includes a notch on each lateral side which separate the bladders into one or more bottom bladders and one or more top bladders.

97. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 89, wherein the inflatable garment includes a pocket having one or more openings for communicating with the respective bladders, and wherein the massage device further includes inflation tubing extending from the inflation assembly into the pocket.

98. (Previously Presented) An inflatable garment as set forth in claim 97, wherein the inflatable garment is shaped to accommodate a lower leg portion of a user, wherein the garment includes a notch on each lateral side which separate the bladders into one or more bottom bladders and one or more top bladders, and wherein the pocket includes one or more slots adjacent one of the notches to provide an entry passage for the inflation tubing into a top portion and a bottom portion of the pocket.

99. (Previously Presented) A massage device for use in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the massage device comprising:
an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume;
an inflation assembly for providing pressurized fluid to the bladders to the respective bladders; and
means for equalizing inflation volume of each of the bladders.

100. (Previously Presented) A massage device as set forth in claim 99 further comprising means for equalizing inflation time of each of the bladders.

101. (Previously Presented) A massage device as set forth in claim 99 further comprising means for equalizing applied pressure of each of the bladders.

102. (Previously Presented) A massage device for use in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the massage device comprising:
an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part;
an inflation assembly for providing pressurized fluid to the bladders to the respective bladders; and
means for providing a snug fit of the inflatable garment on a user.

103. (Previously Presented) A method of massaging a body part in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the method comprising:

providing an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part wherein each of the bladders has approximately the same inflated volume;
inflating the bladders;
deflating the bladders; and
equalizing inflation volume of each of the bladders.

104. (Previously Presented) A method of massaging a body part as set forth in claim 103 further comprising equalizing inflation time of each of the bladders.

105. (Previously Presented) A method of massaging a body part as set forth in claim 103 further comprising equalizing applied pressure of each of the bladders.

106. (Previously Presented) A method of massaging a body part in an unsupervised and unattended setting, the method comprising:

providing an inflatable garment having a plurality of inflation bladders to apply pressure to a body part;
inflating the bladders;
deflating the bladders; and
providing a snug fit of the inflatable garment on a user.